

Message Text

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 NEW DE 09268 151411Z
ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 NSC-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10
NSAE-00 PA-01 ICA-11 SP-02 /056 W
-----074473 160621Z /10
R 150625Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2237

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE NEW DELHI 9268

THE FOLLOWING TELEGRAM WAS SENT ACTION NEW DELHI INFO DACCA,
BOMBAY AND MADRAS 14 JUNE 1978 AND IS REPEATED TO YOU.

QUOTE:

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE CALCUTTA 1001

E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: PINT IN
SUBJECT: PANCHAYAT ELECTIONS SUCCESS FOR CPI(M) IN WEST BENGAL;
SIMILAR NEWS FROM TRIPURA

REF: CALCUTTA 0939

1. THE CPI(M) HAS SCORED A MAJOR SUCCESS IN THE THREE-
TIER WEST BENGAL PANCHAYAT ELECTIONS CONDUCTED JUNE 4. WE
UNDERSTAND THAT AS THE COUNTING OF RESULTS FOR A TOTAL
OF 56,000 SEATS WENT ON IN THE LATTER PART OF LAST WEEK
THERE WAS EXUBERANCE AT CPI(M) HEADQUARTER IN ALIMUNDDIN
ST., AND GLOOM WAS THICK ELSEWHERE NOTABLY IN THE CPI AND
ORGAIZATIONAL JANATA OFFICES.

2. A. WITH THE TALLY NOW VITRUALLY COMPLETE, AT THE
VILLAGE LEVEL (46,953 TOTAL SEATS) THE CPI(M) WON
60.2 PERCENT. ITS LEFT FRONT PARTNERS TOOK AN
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 NEW DE 09268 151411Z

ADDITIONAL 6.9 PERCENT, THE CONGRESS(I) 9.7 PERCENT,
INDEPENDENTS (INCLUDING AN UNSPECIFIED NUMBER OF P.C. SEN'S
"PARTYLESS DEMOCRATS") WON 20.2 PERCENT AND
THE REGULAR JANATA REGISTERED VIRTUALLY NIL
(0.1 PERCENT). B. AT THE INTERMEDIATE LEVEL
(8,430 TOTAL SEATS) THE RESULTS WERE CPI(M)
66.4 PERCENT, RSP AND FORWARD BLOC (I.E. LEFT

FRONT ASSOCIATES OF THE CPI(M) 7.9 PERCENT, CONGRESS(I), 7.4 PERCENT, AND INDEPENDENTS 15.5 PERCENT. AT DISTRICT LEVEL (648 TOTAL SEATS), THE SEAT PERCENTAGES WERE CPI(M) 76.2 PERCENT, RSP AND FB 10.4 PERCENT, CONGRESS(I) 3.7 PERCENT, AND INDEPENDENTS 7.6 PERCENT. IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT THESE ARE PERCENTAGES OF SEATS WON, NOT REPEAT NOT SHARES OF THE POPULAR VOTE. SEAT RESULTS USUALLY EXAGGERATE THE STRENGTH OF WINNERS AND DOWNPLAY THE POSITION OF LOSERS; AN EVALUATION OF THE CPI(M)'S RURAL POPULAR SUPPORT WILL NOT REALLY BE POSSIBLE UNTIL VOTE TOTALS, AS WELL AS SEAT RESULTS, ARE PUBLISHED. THE CPI(M)'S STATE SECRETARY PROMODE DAS GUPTA IS A MASTER CRAFTSMAN AT SQUEEZING EVERY LAST SEAT OUT OF A GIVEN AMOUNT OF VOTING SUPPORT; WE HAVE HEARD ONE PRELIMINARY REPORT THAT THE CONGRESS(I) WAS MUCH CLOSER TO THE CPI(M) IN VOTES THAN IT WAS IN SEATS, AND THIS IS QUITE PLAUSIBLE. VOTING PARTICIPATION IN THE ELECTIONS, WE UNDERSTAND, WAS HEAVY.

3. THE CPI(M) WILL DOMINATE ALL THE ZILLA (DISTRICT) PARISHADS, EXCEPT DARJEELING. IT IS WORTH NOTING THAT THE REGULAR CPM DID VERY WELL IN THE DISTRICTS FROM WHICH INTRA-PARTY DISSENSION AND RENEGADE CPM CANDIDATES HAD BEEN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 03 NEW DE 09268 151411Z

REPORTED. CONGRESS(I) APPEARS TO HAVE DONE BEST IN MURSHIDABAD AND MALDA, TWO HEAVILY MUSLIM DISTRICTS. EARLY INDICATIONS THAT THE SECONDARY PARTNERS IN THE LEFT FRONT (RSP AND FORWARD BLOC) AS WELL AS THE REGULAR (I.E. ANTI-P.C. SEN) JANATA WERE DOING BADLY, WERE CONFIRMED. AN IMMEDIATE REACTION TO THE JANATA'S COLLAPSE WAS CHANDRASHEKHAR'S DESPATCH OF P.C. CHUNDER TO CALCUTTA TO WOO P.C. SEN BACK INTO THE STATE JANATA PARTY LEADERSHIP.

4. ABOUT TWO-THIRDS OF THE STATE'S POPULATION LIVES IN THE RURAL DISTRICTS THAT SELECT PANCHAYATS, AND ABOUT ONE THIRD IS IN CALCUTTA OR OTHER URBAN AREAS WHICH WILL HAVE MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS LATER. IN THE COUNTRY-SIDE WE THINK THE CPM AND LEFT FRONT WERE STRENGTHENED BY: A) THEIR SUCCESS IN MAINTAINING LAW AND ORDER DURING THEIR YEAR IN OFFICE, INCLUDING THE RESTRAINING OF THEIR OWN CADRE FROM HARRASSMENT OF CONGRESS SUPPORTERS. B) THE EXPANSION OF PRIMARY EDUCATIONS IN THE RURAL AREAS, A POLICY WHICH ALSO MEANT THE HIRING OF MANY NEW TEACHERS WHO WERE ACTIVE IN SUPPORT OF THE CPI(M) IN THE

PANCHAYAT ELECTIONS. C) MAKING SCHOOLING UP TO CLASS EIGHT FREE, AND PROMISING TO EXTEND FREE EDUCATION TO CLASS TEN NEXT YEAR, EVEN THOUGH THESE STEPS MEAN THE REMOVAL OF WHAT ARE NOW NOT MUCH MORE THAN TOKEN FEES. D) EXEMPTION OF SMALL HOLDERS FROM LAND TAX, AS A FIRST STEP IN A REPORTED PLAN TO SWITCH FROM A LAND TAX TO AN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCT TAX. E) THE DESIRE OF COUNTRY PEOPLE TO STAY ON THE RIGHT SIDE OF THE PARTY IN POWER IN THE STATE, SINCE IT DISPENSES OFFICIAL PATRONAGE AND DEVELOPMENT AID, AND F) THE CPI(M)'S TACTIC, WE UNDERSTAND, OF PLAYING DOWN ITS TENANT FARMER REFORMS (BARGADAR ACT) BECAUSE THE FEARS OF THE MIDDLE AND UPPER PEASANTRY MADE THESE CHANGES A NET LIABILITY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 04 NEW DE 09268 151411Z

IN THE PANCHAYAT ELECTION CONTEXT.

5. THE PANCHAYAT ELECTIONS, IN THE FORM THEY TOOK IN WEST BENGAL, APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN A PROJECT OF PROMODE DAS GUPTA (SEE CALCUTTA A-17), WHO INTENDED TO POLITICIZE THE COUNTRYSIDE TO SOME DEGREE, AND TO CREATE A STRUCTURE WHICH COULD BE USED TO WORK ON REFORM OF RURAL SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIPS. IT ALSO SEEMS LIKELY THAT A DEFENSIVE MOTIVATION WAS PRESENT: THE STATE PARTY SECRETARY WISHED TO CREATE WIDESPREAD AND LEGITIMATE BASES OF ACTIVITY, POWER, AND ORGANIZATION WHICH WOULD BE UNREACHABLE SHOULD NEW DELHI MOVE AGAINST THE STATE GOVERNMENT AS IT DID IN THE LATE SIXTIES. THE GREAT SUCCESS OF DA GUPTA'S PANCHAYAT REVIVAL WILL DOUBTLESS STRENGTHEN HIM WITHIN THE PARTY, AND STRENGTHEN THE PARTY WITHIN THE STATE AND IN EASTERN INDIA, BUT IT ALSO CONFRONTS THE CPI(M) WITH INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT PROBLEMS OF RECONCILING A NOW VERY BORAD BASE OF OPERATIONS WITH A STRONG CENTRALIZED LEADERSHIP. THE PARTY HERE HAS RECENTLY EXPANDED FROM ABOUT 30,000 TO 35,000 MEMBERS, AND IN ADDITION WILL NOW HAVE A LARGE NUMBER OF NON-MEMBER NOMINEES ACTING IN ITS NAME IN THE PANCHAYAT SYSTEM. ITS PROGRAM OF LOW-LEVEL ORGANIZATIONAL AND EDUCATIONAL MEETINGS IS GOING FORWARD, AS ARE ITS DELIBERATIONS ON JUST WHAT WILL BE THE PANCHAYATS' POWERS AND PROGRAMS.

6. TRIPURA: IT IS REPORTED HERE THAT RESULTS FOR 685 OUT OF A TOTAL 689 VILLAGE PANCHAYAT SEATS IN TRIPURA HAVE BEEN ANNOUNCED. THE CPI(M) HAS WON 465, THE TUJS (TRIPURA TRIBAL ASSOCIATION) TOOK 58, CONGRESS (I) 17, AND INDEPENDENTS 142, WITH THE RSP WINNING LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 05 NEW DE 09268 151411Z

2 AND THE FORWARD BLOC ONE. LYDON UNQUOTE
BLOOD

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ELECTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 15 jun 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978NEWDE09268
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780251-0704
Format: TEL
From: NEW DELHI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780656/aaaabwcn.tel
Line Count: 177
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: c3936088-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 CALCUTTA 939
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2339928
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PANCHAYAT ELECTIONS SUCCESS FOR CPI(M) IN WEST BENGAL; SIMILAR NEWS FROM TRIPURA
TAGS: PINT, IN
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/c3936088-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014